

More on Isham Jones (p.6)

THE MAGAZINE OF RECORD INFORMATION & STATISTICS
65 GRAND AVENUE ♦ BROOKLYN 5, N. Y.



ROSA HENDERSON
Yesterday and Today

Gulf Coast Seven, p.9

Bell label

Playa
5702-
5811

Small Chicago groups (black, red - party / app)

(June Cobb, etc.)



"Best wishes"
To Mr Davis
From
"Rosa Henderson"

Alpha
1966



"WHERE ARE THEY NOW?"

by Frank Kelly

BON BON, the cute little fellow wearing full dress singing with JAN SAVITT's TOP HATTERS currently lives in Yeadon, Pa., where he is employed by a brewing corp. Many of his fans thought Bon Bon was dead. IRV LESHNER, who played piano with JAN SAVITT nowadays is a psychologist for the Jewish Family Service in Philadelphia. PEGGY KING, radio, records vocalist and former TV wife of GEORGE GOBEL - nowadays has been TV interviewer in Phila., Pa. over the ABC-TV outlet in the City of Brotherly Love. Peggy has two secretaries... BERNADETTE CASTRO, heiress to the Castro convertible fortune, who pulled out her Dad's beds on TV when a tot (still does) has been attending the University of Florida and spinning records over WFUV in Gainesville, Fla. NICK STUART, ex actor-band leader, and former husband of SUE CAROL LADD these days has been operating a men's shop in Biloxi, Miss. BOB SOEURS, who blew sax with AL DONAHUE, etc., is Prexy of the President in Hong Kong. REX STEWART, one of the DUKE ELLINGTON Orch's legends, has been a 6 till 10 AM jazz jockey over a HOLLYWOOD, Calif. radio station. IDA WARD who may be the last survivor of the famed FLORADORA girls (she was professionally known as IDA GRAY) has been lodged in a N. Y. City nursing home. LILY PONS, Met Opera diva (retired) has been operating an interior decorating shop in Dallas, Texas. Remember TIM McCOY, the Western film star? He has been living near the Mexican border and still is in show biz. Tim and his two sons tour the U. S. every season with a small circus.... JAMES SHIRO, better known as JIMMY SHEER, when he was a variety artist, has been Prexy of the National Variety Artists Union. When stage-film comedian EDDIE BRACKEN's phone stopped ringing from theatrical agents, BRACKEN got himself some side lines: like broadcast stations, electronics co. that mfrs. walkie talkies, part owner of the Sunrise Press operating eight weekly newspapers. EDDIE also does occasional TV commercials. Former song star HERB JEFFRIES, famous for his hit record of "Flamingo" has been making his home in Honolulu where Herb works at his new career, an exec. with a large shipping co. PEPPY DeALBREW, former ballroom dancer, later host of nite clubs here and in Paris, France (Chez Florence, Place Pigalle, Chapeau Rouge, etc.) has turned interior decorator for the chic set. Remember RENZO CESANA who created such a stir for a spell as "THE CONTINENTAL" on radio & TV - had most of the gals swooning. Well, he emerged from retirement in Italy to resume acting, had

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

COVER: Vintage photo (ca. 1925) courtesy of Joe Davis' snapshots (1963): Rosa (necklace), Rosa's daughter, Victoria Spivey - photos by Len Kunstadt

REGARDING BLUES RESEARCH:

This publication is a subsidiary of RECORD RESEARCH, edited by ANTHONY ROTANTE and PAUL SHEATSLEY, and is a vehicle for exploring the vast field of contemporary Blues recordings. It has been lauded as the singularly most important document of research of the post-war (1946) Blues. It is published irregularly, averaging 3/4 issues per year. THERE IS NO SUBSCRIPTION SYSTEM TO BLUES RESEARCH. EACH ISSUE COSTS THIRTY CENTS (U.S.A.), THIRTY FIVE CENTS (FOREIGN). Also available from DEREK COLLIER at 25 BROADFIELD, HARLOW, ESSEX, ENGLAND. 2/6d each.

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ROSA HENDERSON

Yesterday and Today By Len Kunstadt

In the early 50s your scribe had the opportunity to interview Fletcher Henderson and his wife, Leora in their once fashionable "striver's row" residence in Harlem U.S.A. Little did I realize how significant this meeting would be as Fletcher's life was just about over - and a great life it was. Up on their living room wall there was a large fascinating picture which had all the appearance of being nearly a painting. It pictured a lady with a well formed smiling face, pretty features with large set searching eyes. I asked for the identity and "Smack" (Henderson's nick-name) retorted, "THAT'S ROSA HENDERSON, THE FAMOUS BLUES SINGER". I further queried excitedly, "Is she related to you? Where is she? Is she still active?" He answered, "No, but I worked with her many times on recordings. She passed away a long time ago." This left a lump in my throat as Rosa was one of my favorite vintage blues artists.

BUT FLETCHER WAS WRONG. Just about 20 blocks away there lived a hale and hearty ROSA HENDERSON who at that time had been away from show business for nearly 2-decades. She was a regular employee of one of New York City's large Department stores - and the show world was just a fond memory. Actually we did not find this out until 1963. It was spot-luck. Yours truly in the company of Victoria Spivey who had met Rosa years before, and Gracie Allen (no relation to George Burns' Gracie! smiles!!) who was a show trouper buddy of Victoria's, brought up the name of Rosa Henderson. Miss Allen not only verified Rosa's existence but mentioned that she was in regular contact with her and would try to arrange a meeting for us. At about the same time at an X-Glamour Girls All Star Show we had the good fortune to meet Rosa's daughter, a fine performer and entertainer in her own right, and she offered us the opportunity to meet Rosa.

After all these years - and with the once distressing thought that Rosa was gone - two contacts came forth within a few weeks of each other, and opened the road for us to see this great lady of the blues. Out of the past right into the present came ROSA HENDERSON with her fine throaty booming blues voice with its swinging rhythmic qualities who had made many a fine recording in the 20s - and who by today's standards is a blues Queen of almost legendary status. What would she be like today?

My query was answered. It was truly one of the most exciting moments when Victoria Spivey and your reporter met the ROSA HENDERSON in June of 1963. When we rang her door bell, a full loud voice sounded off like a bell, almost in melodic form, "WHO'S THERE?" We knew who it was!! (smiles). And she knew we were coming - and graciously made our visit a very happy one. The first thing that came to our attention was her large eyes which mirror everything about her - and her beautiful long braided hair made up in Indian fashion. She possesses a natural cheerful disposition. When excited her voice just breaks out like an echo chamber and fills every corner of the room. And the comedienne is all over - just a natural ham as she mugs and spouts quips of her memories in an amusing manner.

She was born ROSA DESCHAMPS, November 24, 1896, in Henderson Kentucky. She began her career about 1913 in her

uncle's carnival show. She played tent and plantation shows all over the South with one long streak of 5 years in Texas. She sang nothing but the blues. During this period she married Slim Henderson, a great comedian and showman, and she became professionally, ROSA HENDERSON. She entered vaudeville in New Orleans with her husband. One of her most delightful remembrances of this period was seeing Lizzie Miles in a carnival riding an elephant.. Slim joined up with John Mason and from this association a troupe was born which included Rosa. They played the country from one end to the other. In the mid 20s the Mason-Henderson troupe really began to hit big time with headline attraction billing in many of the larger theatres. Rosa also received star billing in some independent ventures. In 1927 she was in a musical comedy revue, THE HARLEM ROUNDERS, at Harlem's New Alhambra Theatre which also featured Tim Moore and Edgar Hayes Symphonic Harmonists. Another 1927 Alhambra show for Rosa was THE SEVENTH AVENUE STROLLERS which also included Lena Wilson, Manton Moreland and husband, Slim. Still another 1927 musical was RAMBLIN AROUND with Eddie Hunter and Amanda Randolph. Slim and Rosa had a delightful show-stopper in the show called, "On A South Sea Isle".

From May 1923 through September 1927 Rosa Henderson was a top race blues recording artist. She was on Victor, Vocalion, Ajax, Perfect, Pathe, Brunswick, Paramount, Emerson, Edison, Columbia, Banner, Domino, Regal, Oriole, English Oriole, Silvertone and others. Besides her own name she was Flora Dale on Domino, Mamie Harris and Josephine Thomas on Pathe and Perfect, Sally Ritz (her sister's name) on Banner, and probably Sarah Johnson and Gladys White on other labels.

She speaks glowingly of Fletcher Henderson who helped her out immeasurably with her recordings. She can still remember Fletcher busily scoring her music for her on a noisy subway train as they were studio bound. She remembers veteran pioneer R & B publisher, Joe Davis, - musicians: Cliff Jackson, Louis Metcalf, Rex Stewart, Coleman Hawkins, Wendell Talbert, Bub Miley and James P. Johnson. She mentioned that she never feared the great Bessie Smith, professionally, - but she had a great deal of respect for Mattie Hite.

In 1927 Rosa was hitting her real stride as a single - but just a year later Rosa quit in her prime due to the unexpected death of husband, Slim. She was totally disheartened.. She made a few more appearances including one with Slim's partner, John Mason - and another with a Frank Montgomery production in Atlantic City but that was just about the end of the show business road for Rosa. In August of 1931 she returned to the recording studio and made her last recording with James P. Johnson for Columbia.

Rosa Henderson retired and settled down to the normal existence of mother and household provider. Her daughter entered show business and was a top chorine in many shows.

Today Rosa is a great-grandmother with a great grandson who she idolizes. In January of 1964 Rosa did venture away from obscurity and was a guest at Victoria Spivey's Mamie Smith benefit at the Celebrity Club in Harlem. It was hoped that she would sing - but it did not happen. However it was wonderful to see Rosa in the public light again. The ovation she received when MC Boots Marshall introduced her was indeed heartwarming and sincere. It certainly proved that she was not forgotten.

Only recently has it been possible for a large number of collectors to listen to and appreciate the work of one of the many half forgotten Chicago musicians, JUNIUS C. COBB. This is due to reissues on the AUSTRALIAN SWAGGIE and the German CORAL labels. A good outline of his career is to be found in Bill Haesler's cover notes for SWAGGIE JCS-33726. Junie Cobb was very active in the Chicago of the 1920's, being the regular banjoist in KING OLIVER's band from December 1924 to April 1925 and from December 1926 to April 1927 (cf. Rust-Allen); he was also the banjoist in JIMMIE NOONE's band from winter, 1928 to spring, 1929. After that he had his own band. Though Junie Cobb played many instruments, it was the "reeds" which were his domain, above all, the clarinet and the tenor sax. On these he displayed his vigorous style, his full tone and an attack not unlike that of JOHNNY DODDS. He is often easily recognizable as he uses some characteristic phrases which occur in several of his recordings (cf. East Coast Trot/Chicago Buzz/Shake That Jelly Roll/Good Time Mama). But this holds true only for those recordings on which Cobb is heard playing clt., alt., tenor. I have not been able, however, to identify Junie Cobb's trumpet playing with any certainty.

On most of the Cobb recordings the cornet or trumpet is played by either Punch Miller or Jimmy Cobb. It might be useful to add a few notes on their respective styles of playing. Punch Miller's playing can be identified by his work on his recordings for Jimmy Bertrand, Frankie Franko, Jimmy Wade and Albert Wynn. He is a rather fast-fingering trumpeter, but with frequent "slurrings" and runs of "in-between" notes. Jimmy Cobb's style is best heard on his 1934/1935 recordings with Jimmie Noone's band. He has a very explosive attack. e.g. he hits the notes hard and often plays muted trumpet, producing a sharp tone.

AN ATTEMPTED ** JUNIE COBB ** DISCOGRAPHY (ORIGINALS ONLY)

VIOLA BARTLETTE: Vcl., acc. by Cobbs Paramount Syncopators*(sic!) or Lovie Austin's Serenaders: Junie Cobb(?) (cnt.), unknown tbn., Johnny Dodds(clt), Lovie Austin(pno). Chicago, May, 1926

2545-2 SUNDAY MORNING BLUES Para 12369
2546-1,-2 YOU DON'T MEAN ME NO GOOD Para 12363
2552-1,-2 OUT BOUND TRAIN BLUES - -
2554-2 *WALK EASY CAUSE MY PAPA'S HERE Para 12369

NOTE:-WALK EASY..has composer credit: Junius Cobbs (sic!)

JUNIE COBB'S HOMETOWN BAND: Johnny Dodds(clt), Junie Cobb(alt), prob. Tiny Parham(pno), Eastern Woodfork(bjo). Chicago, August, 1926

2619-3 EAST COAST TROT Para 12382

2620-3 CHICAGO BUZZ - -

NOTE:-CHICAGO BUZZ has composer credit: H.S. Parham.

PICKETT-PARHAM APOLLO SYNCOPATORS: B.T. Wingfield(cnt), Charlie Lawson(tbn), Junie Cobb(clt/alt), unknown ten., Leroy Pickett(vln), Tiny Parham(pno), Jimmy Bertrand(?) (dms). Chicago, ca. December, 1926

4053-1 ALEXANDER, WHERE'S THAT BAND Para 12441

4054-1 MOJO STRUT - -

NOTE:- Cobb is not identifiable by ear with certainty. Personnel from Rust's Jazz Records.

JUNIE C. COBB AND HIS GRAINS OF CORN: Jimmy Cobb(?) (cnt), unknown clt, Junie Cobb(ten), Jimmy Blythe(pno), prob. William Lyle (sbs), Buddy Burton(dms) Chicago, August, 21, 1928

C-2252-A,-B ENDURANCE STOMP Voc 1204

C-2253- YEARNING AND BLUE - -

NOTE:-There might be some connection with the July, 1928 session by the STATE STREET RAMBLERS. The clarinet player seems to be the same man. As for the rhythm section, mxs 2254/55 were cut by THE MIDNIGHT ROUNDERS(both titles have "Blythe" in their composer credit).

JIMMIE NOONE'S APEX CLUB ORCH.: Jimmie Noone(clt), Joe Poston(alt), Alex Hill(pno), Junie Cobb(bjo), Bill Newton (bbs), Johnny Wells(dms). Chicago, December 6, 1928

C-2640- SOME RAINY DAY Voc 1240

NOTE:-For this and the following Noone sessions Rust's Jazz Records is not always reliable!

E.C. COBB AND HIS CORN EATERS: Junie Cobb(?) (cnt), Cecil Irwin(clt/ten), Jimmy Blythe(?) (pno), Jimmy Bertrand(dms/xylo) Chicago, December 10, 1928

48711-2 TRANSATLANTIC STOMP Vic V-38023

48712-1 BARRELHOUSE STOMP - -

NOTE:-The cornet sounds uncertain technically. This might be Junie Cobb, especially as the clt/ten. does not sound like him at all. He might even be the pianist!

STATE STREET STOMPERS: Junie Cobb(clt/alt/vcl*), Thomas A. Dorsey(pno/speech@), Hudson Whittaker(gtr) Jimmy Bertrand(dms). Chicago, December 14, 1928

48755-2 *ROLLING MILL STOMP Vic unissued

48756-2 @PANAMA BLUES - -

NOTE:-Details from Rust's Jazz Records.

JIMMIE NOONE'S APEX CLUB ORCH.: George Mitchell(cnt), unknown tbn, Jimmy Noone(clt), Joe Poston(alt), Alex Hill(pno), Junie Cobb(bjo), Bill Newton(tuba), Johnny Wells(dms), *Noone and Poston(vcl.duet), @Unknown male vcl.

C-2710-A,-B *IT'S TIGHT LIKE THAT
C-2711-A,-B *LET'S SOW A WILD OAT
C-2712- @SHE'S FUNNY THAT WAY
JUNIE C. COBB AND HIS GRAINS OF CORN: Prob. Jimmy Cobb(cnt), Junie Cobb(clt/ten), Jimmy Blythe(?) (pno), Frankie Woods(vln), unknown bjo, prob. William Lyle(sbs), Buddy Burton(dms/wbd/vcl*) Chicago, February 7, 1929
C-2920-A' SHAKE THAT JELLY ROLL Voc 1263
C-2921-A *DON'T CRY HONEY - -

Woods out. Chicago, February 9, 1929
C-2940-C SMOKE SHOP DRAG Voc 1269
C-2941-D BOOT THAT THING - -

NOTE:-The pianist might be Darnell Howard
KING MUTT AND HIS TENNESSEE THUMPERS: Punch Miller(?) (cnt), prob. Junie Cobb(clt), Jimmy Blythe(pno), unknown bjo/gtr, prob. Buddy Burton(dms/vcl) RICHMOND INDIANA February 12, 1929

14789-A BLYTHE'S STOMP Champ. 15929
14790-A SHAKE YOUR SHIMMY Spt 9432
14791 ORIGINAL STUMPS Spt 9431
14792-A ST. LOUIS BOUND Unissued
14793 GOOD TIME MAMA Gen 6844, Champ 15696, 40043, Spt 9369

14794 MAXWELL STREET STOMP Gen 6796, Champ 15696, 40043, Spt 9431
14796 NUT HOUSE STOMP Gen 6796, Spt 9369
14797 I WANNA GET IT Gen 6844, Champ 15929 Spt 9432

NOTE:- Champions as FRISKY FOOT JACKSON, Supertones as GRAVEYARD JOHNSON - only mxs. 14793 -94 were heard from this session. There might be a second reed man on some of the above recordings.

JIMMIE NOONE'S APEX CLUB ORCH.-(as for Dec. 6, 1928) Chicago, Feb. 26, 1929

C-3005- ST. LOUIS BLUES Swaggie 33787

C-3006- CHICAGO RHYTHM Voc 1267

Chicago, March 2, 1929

C-3031- I GOT A MISERY Voc 1267

WINDY RHYTHM KINGS: Prob. Jimmy Cobb(cnt), Junie Cobb(clt/ten), Ernie Smith(bsx), Jimmy Blythe(?) (pno), unknown dms. Chicago, April , 1929

21255-1 SOUTH AFRICAN BLUES Para 12770

21256-1 PIGGLY WIGGLY BLUES - -

JUNIE C. COBB AND HIS GRAINS OF CORN: Jabbo Smith(?) (cnt), Junie Cobb(alt/ten), unknown bar, Jimmy Blythe(pno), unknown bjo, bbs, Buddy Burton(dms/vcl) Chicago, October 24, 1929

C-4691-A ONCE OR TWICE Voc 1449

NOTE:-This is the correct mx. number!

JUNIE COBB AND HIS BAND: Instrumentation and personnel unknown. Chicago, April , 1935

90289-A EVERYWHERE YOU GO Decca unissued

90290-A JOE LOUIS CHANT - -

SOME NOTES ON REPORTED JUNIE COBB RECORDINGS

MA RAINEY, acc. by her Georgia Boys: prob. B.T. Wingfield(cnt), unknown clt, pno. Chicago, ca. Feb. , 1927

407-2 WEEPIN' WOMAN BLUES Para 12455

408-2 SOON THIS MORNING Para 12438

NOTE:- Wingfield is identifiable by comparison to his work with Cow Cow Davenport from about the same time. The clarinet does not resemble Dodds nor Cobb. O'Bryant was already dead at that time.

DOC COOK: Cobb's presence was rumoured for the last Doc Cook session(march 30, 1928), but he is not identifiable by ear.

KANSAS CITY TIN ROOF STOMPERS: Punch Miller(?) (cnt), Cecil Irwin(?) (clt/ten), Ernie Smith(bsx), Frank Melrose(pno), Tommy Taylor(?) (dms), Jimmy Bertrand(xylo) Chicago, March 15, 1928

C-3127- AUNT JEMIMA STOMP Br 7066

C-3128- ST. LOUIS BOUND - -

NOTE:-Cornet and clt/ten are definitely NOT the Cobb brothers, as far as aural evidence can tell.

KANSAS CITY STOMPERS: unknown cnt, prob. Darnell Howard(clt), Ernie Smith(bar), Frank Melrose(pno), Tommy Taylor(?) (dms)?, Jimmy Bertrand(xylo)

C-3761- SHANGHAI HONEYMOON Br 7091

C-3762- GOOD FEELIN' BLUES - -

NOTE:-The cornet is NOT played by Cobb. It might be Punch Miller again.

ANY COMMENTS/CORRECTIONS/ADDITIONS WELCOME !!! 5

